

Rundle did not handle in Cup

PETER BLACKMAN

Wycombe Wanderers have every right to feel bitter today after an astonishing penalty decision that forced an FA Cup first round second replay against Southern League club Bedford.

In the last minute of extra time 34-year-old Guildford referee Malcolm Sinclair awarded Bedford a penalty that resulted in a 3-3 draw and another replay at Wycombe on Saturday.

Mr. Sinclair penalised Wycombe centre-half Ian Rundle for handling the ball, and backed his judgment afterwards by saying: "I saw the player move his hand towards the ball. There is no doubt at all it was a penalty."

A dejected Rundle told me: "I watched the ball bounce off the ground and positioned myself behind it. The ball caught me high on the left side of the chest."

NOT DELIBERATE

Wycombe coach Barry Darvill said: "It was the worst decision I have seen. No one could fail to miss the fact that there was no deliberate act by Rundle to touch the ball with his hand."

A thorough check among Bedford officials provided no further evidence. Most of them, including manager Ron Burgess, said they were watching something else and did not see the incident.

I did—and say without reservation that Rundle did not handle the ball. The decision to award a penalty was extremely harsh.

After winning a toss for choice of grounds, Wycombe now pre-

pare for a 10,000 gate at Loakes Park and must feel confident of beating Bedford at the third attempt and earning an away second-round tie against Oxford United.

Sadly, Bedford lack the bite and steel in defence that took them into the fourth round last season only to lose to Everton, the Cup winners.

Unquestionably, they are capable of displaying greater flair in attack, but still fall short of persistence—a commodity that is Wycombe's trade mark.

The non-stop running of wingers Les Merrick and Len Worley provide an ideal backcloth to the more methodical approach of the inside trio—Keith Samuel, Paul Bates and Tony Horseman.

Perhaps the biggest problem facing Bedford is their finishing. Neat approach work and excellent prompting by wing-halves Graham Willis and Dave Corbett was ruined time and again by wild or feeble shooting.

One thing is certain: Wycombe have already proved themselves excellent ambassadors for senior amateur football at a time when performances this season rarely have been above mediocre.

30th Nov '66

Sturrock penalty rescues Bedford

Bedford 3 Wycombe Wanderers 3

(F.A. Cup, First Rd. Replay, after extra time)



THE toss of a coin gave Isthmian League amateurs Wycombe the right to stage a second replay of this tie for the right to meet Oxford United.

The toss was the final deed of a night that reached a climax in the last minute of extra time.

Referee Malcolm Sinclair was bundled off the field by angry Wycombe fans after he had given Bedford the penalty that enabled them to snatch a draw.

Wycombe centre-half Ian Rundle handled in front of goal and Bedford's Dave Sturrock cracked home the shot that kept Bedford hopes alive.

It was a bitter blow for Wycombe, who had fought desperately to hold on to a single goal lead they had richly earned after the shock of a Sturrock goal in the 41st minute.

They levelled with a 25-yard drive from centre forward Paul Bates and powered to the lead in the 80th minute when Tony Horseman slipped in to beat past goalkeeper Alan Collier.

Then Bedford's David Skinn dived full length to squeeze in a header from a Sturrock corner and commit the sides to extra time.

What a 30-minute cliff-hanger that proved to be! Les Merrick eventually baffled the Bedford defence and waited through to stroke the ball past Collier.

Then came that late equaliser.